Manufacturers. Besides MIG-21 BIS variant aircraft have been planned for upgrade also.

Optimum use of funds for Development of Air Missile System

2480. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention have been drawn to the news-item captioned "Funds for Trishul, Akash not utilised" as reported in the Statesman dated the 26th August, 2001;

(b) if so, whether the funds kept for Akash and Trishul surface to air missiles being developed by DRDO has not been utilised;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to utilise the funds and ensure no lapse on the part of development of air missile system?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Both these projects have encountered cetain technology development problem associated with Command Guidance and Integrated Ram Rocket Propulsion System because of which funds have not been utilized fully.

(d) All out efforts are continuing to establish the technologies by 2003 and utilise the funds.

Indian PoW in Pakistan jails

†2481. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made a demand to Government of Pakistan to release Indian Prisoners of War from Pakistani jails;

(b) if so, the number of Indian prisoners of war in Pakistani jails at present as per the figures ascertained by Government;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether Government have received any communication from Government of Pakistan with regard to number of Indian prisoners of war in Pakistani jails;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether Government are taking the response of Government of Pakistan as positive; and

(f) if not, Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) 54 Indian PoWs are beloved to be in Pakistani jails. The Government has consistently taken up the issue of their release and repatriation with the Government of Pakistan at all levels. During the Agra Summit on 17.7.2001 also, Prime Minister urged the Pakistani President to take urgent and purposeful action towards the release of these PoWs,

(c) to (f) Pakistan has never acknowledged the presence of any PoW in its custody. Following the Agra Summit in July this year, Government of Pakistan reportedly conducted another search for Indian PoWs but again reiterated that there was no Indian PoW in Pakistani jails. Government would continue to take up this issue with the Government of Pakistan.

Statement made by Shahi Imam of Delhi

2482. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:
SHRI RAJU PARMAR:
SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:
SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have seen news-item titled "Shahi Imam criticised by lawyers Azmi remark" appearing in the Asian Age, New Delhi on 24th October, 2001;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid have made irresponsible and derogatory statements recently; and